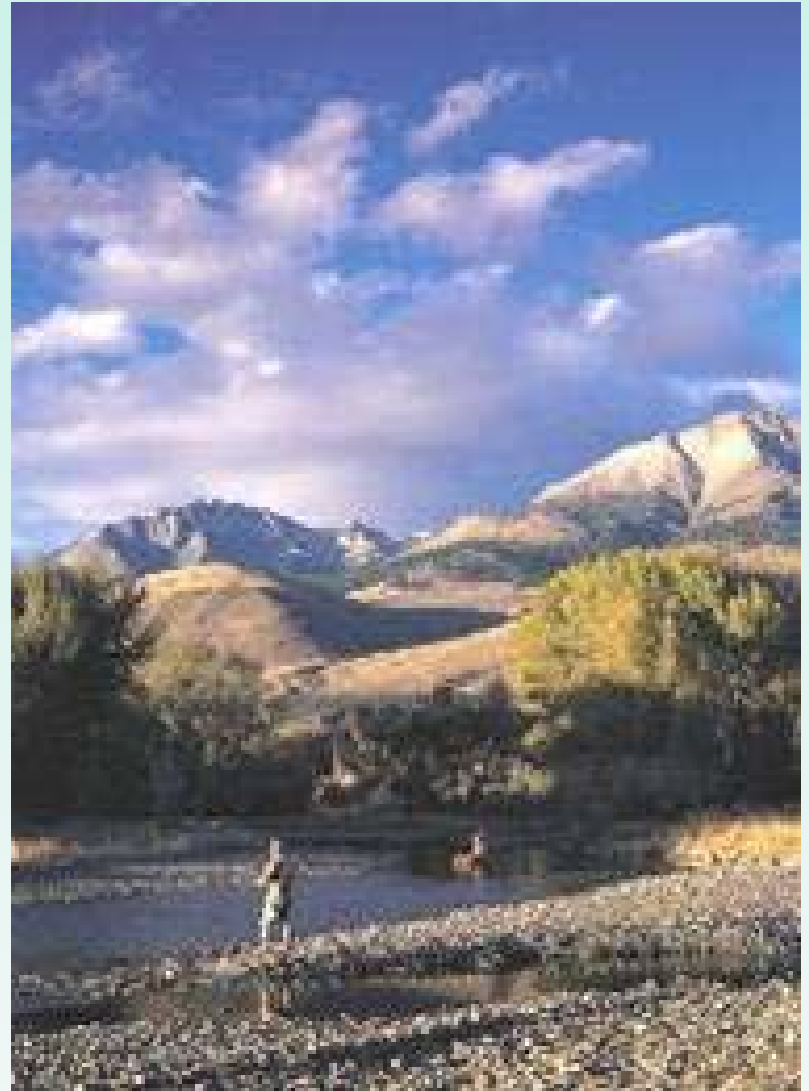


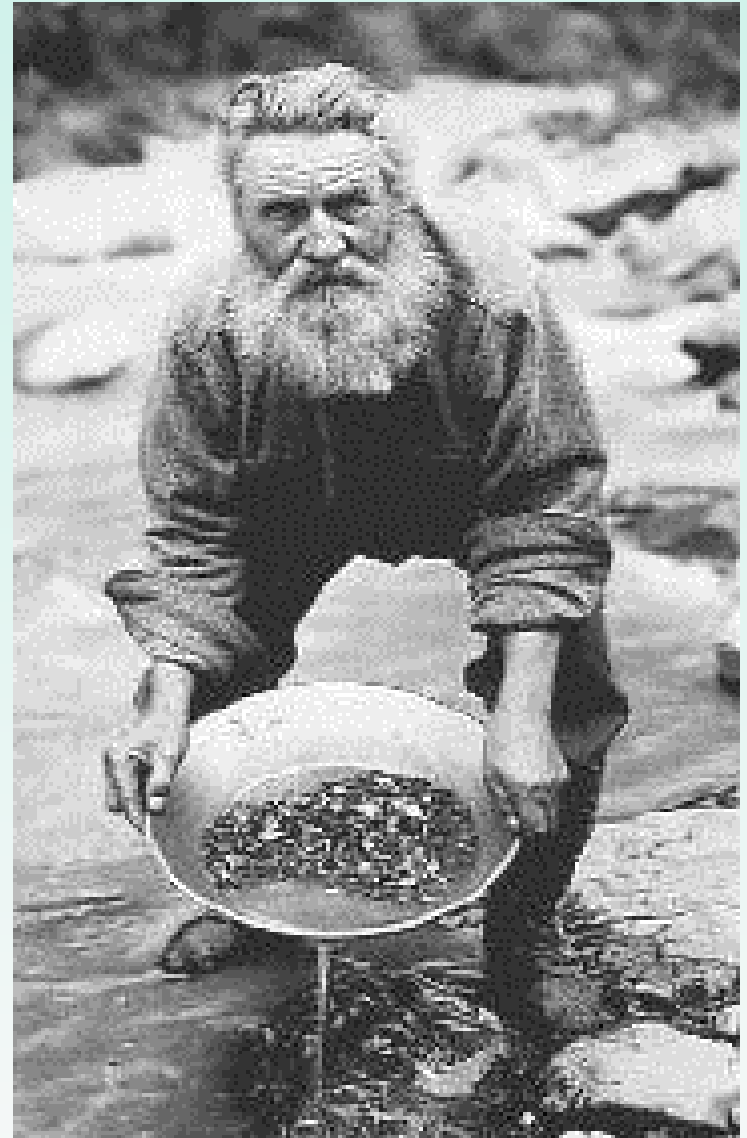
Reshaping of the Political Environment in Montana: Implications for Public Lands Management



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The First 100 Years

Extractive industries based on the land established themselves as the basis of Montana's economy and until the 1920s, Montana expanded its economy to become one of the country's leading agricultural producers adding to its status as a successful mining state.



A New Economy/A New West



Montanans, finding it more difficult to make a living based on traditional extractive and agricultural industries, have again looked to the land.

Today, the land offers tourist-based and service opportunities that diversify the regional economy.

The Neighborhood is Changing in the Rural West



And with it comes
changing
demographics and
political culture.

Democratic Dominance

From 1918 to 1976, Democrats won 25 of 30 elections in the First (Western) District with an average margin of 58.7%.

In the Second (Eastern) District, Democrats won 13 of 32 races with an average margin of 59.6%.

During the 110 years of the state's existence, Democrats have controlled the Governor's seat 17 out 29 terms, or 58.6% of the time.

Montana Swings to the Right

Since 1952 Democrats captured the Governor's seat only five times compared to the Republican's eight successful bids.

From 1980 to 2002 high growth counties voted Republican at a much higher rate than the state as a whole.

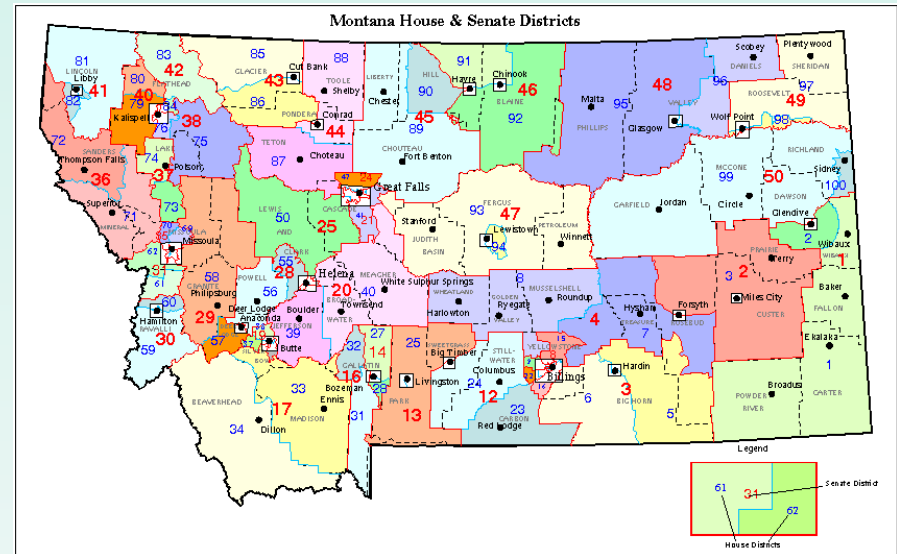
Yet, a statewide poll in January 2000 showed voters ranked environmental issues, education, health care and taxes as top priorities - education 7.1, health care 7.0, clean air and water 6.9, and taxes 6.8. respondents indicated that environmental issues were the "primary concern in casting votes" for elected offices.

Problem Statement

How do the recent demographic, economic and social changes taking place in Montana affect public lands politics?

Analysis of Three Initiatives

Monitoring the public votes on ballot issues is a more accurate representation of the values of the populace than party affiliation



**Influence of the media - difficult to separate
statewide issues from national patterns**

**Montana's initiative and referendum process is
one of the most citizen-friendly in the country
- 76 ballot issues since the 1980 general
election**

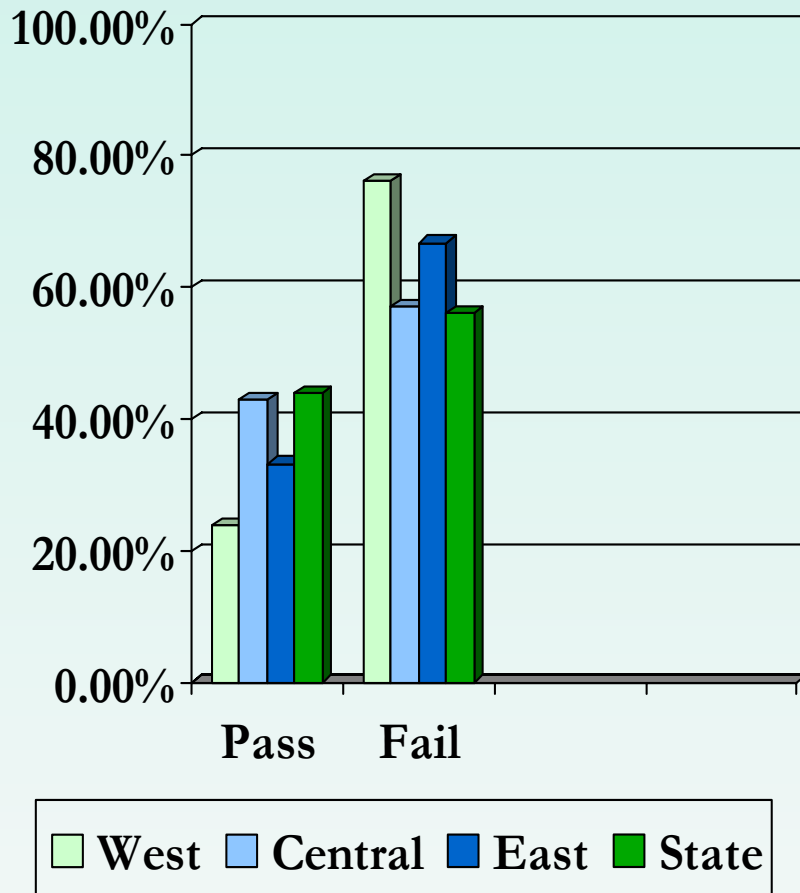
**Feelings toward wildlife, habitat, clean water or
state parks are not a partisan issue**

The Three Initiatives

Short Title	FWP Management Orientation
CI 136 Revise outfitter and hunting licenses	Opposition is management of hunting for Montana for sportsmen rather than landowners.
I 137 Prohibit cyanide process open pit gold and silver mining	Referendum on clean water as an agricultural and recreational resource.
I 143 Game farm reform	Support for healthy wild elk overshadow private property concerns of agriculture.

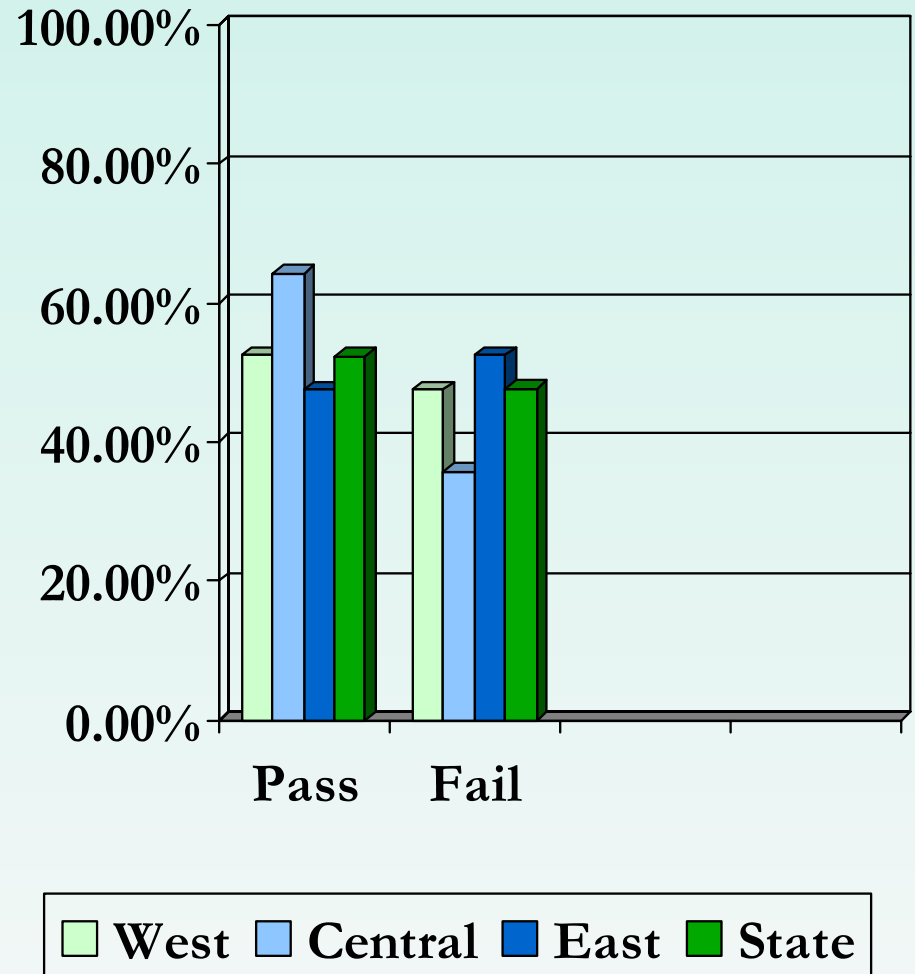
CI 136 – Outfitter Reform

At the state level the initiative failed with a 43.9% in favor and 56.1% opposed. All three regions failed to pass the initiative. Opposition of this initiative can be seen as a favorable outcome for FWP as they continue to manage big game in Montana for sportsmen rather than landowners.



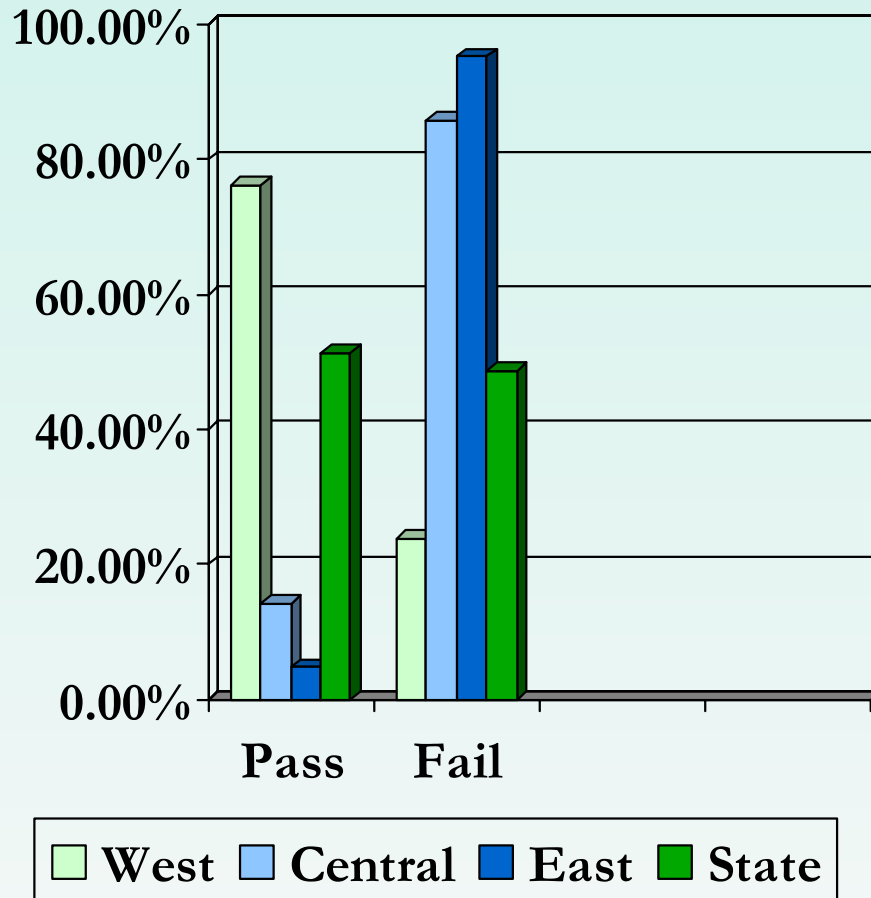
CI-137 – Prohibition on cyanide process

This initiative narrowly passed with a 52.3% to 47.7% margin statewide. In region one and two. Region three passed the initiative by an easy margin. This initiative can be viewed as a referendum on clean water and reflected the importance Montanans place on that important agricultural and recreational resource.



At the state level this initiative narrowly passed (51.4% to 48.6%). Region one passed the proposal by 3 to 1. The other two regions opposed the initiative. This outcome highlights the regional differences. Agricultural interests see this vote as an economic and property rights issue.

In region one where there is less traditional agriculture the support for wild elk overshadowed private economic concerns.



Summary

Short Title	Disposition	FWP Management Orientation
CI 136 Revise outfitter and hunting licenses	56.1% Opposed	Favorable
I 137 Prohibit cyanide process open pit gold and silver mining	52.3% Favor	Favorable
I 143 Game farm reform	51.4% Favor	Favorable

Implications

2000 League of Women Voters poll voters ranked the following as top priorities:

- education 7.1,
- health care 7.0,
- clean air and water 6.9,
- taxes 6.8.

Poll respondents indicated that environmental issues rated as their “primary concern in casting votes” for elected offices

The contemporary voter in Montana is a “hybrid” consisting of two minds.



On one hand they are fiscally and politically conservative and on the other, environmentally conscious.

Public lands agencies enjoy considerable support in the two western regions but are seen as a threat to property rights by those in the eastern counties – mainly because their policies are seen as a threat to the agricultural economy of the region.



One can imagine that user fees for public land access, permits, etc. might find support among voters. These market based approaches “fit” the emergent political culture in the state and pass the burden of government to the end user.





The contemporary Montana voter cares deeply about the quality of the environment in which he lives and willingly casts a vote that reflects that care.

One can legitimately ask if the contemporary Montana legislator represents those social values with his vote.